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You might be surprised to learn that while the state of **Connecticut certifies both dietitians and nutritionists**, it does not require specific certification for a person to offer services as a nutritionist.

However, this does not mean that **becoming a nutritionist** is easy. It is an extremely worthwhile career path if you are interested in helping people with their choices regarding nutrition and optimal wellness.

Typically, a nutritionist has earned at least a bachelor's degree in Nutrition, Food Science, or another similar field. With this, nutritionists can work in a variety of jobs, including food management, nutrition education, research, and fitness. Nutritionists have strong critical thinking and reasoning skills and compassion for other people's feelings and struggles.

Nutritionists who earn a master's degree have the potential for career advancement, professional certifications, and high salary potential within the field. For these reasons, most nutritionists go on to pursue graduate study, such as through a Master's in Nutrition program.

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Licensing nutritionists is determined on a state-by-state basis. Some states require licensing and others do not. Therefore, candidates should always **check with the appropriate regulatory body** in the state in which they plan to practice, in order to know what is needed for the legal practice of nutrition counseling.

In Connecticut, there is no license required for providing general nutrition care. However, only state-certified individuals may use the titles "Connecticut Certified Dietitian-Nutritionist," "Connecticut Certified Dietitian," "Connecticut Certified Nutritionist," or the letters "C.D.N.," "C.D.," "C.N." or any other letters, words, or insignia indicating state certification as a certified dietitian-nutritionist.

Common Nutrition Certification Paths, Explained

Today, we'll focus on three certifications that nutritionists may choose to earn: Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS), Certified Clinical Nutritionist (CCN), and the Diplomate, American Clinical Board of Nutrition (DACBN).

1. Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS)

A Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS) is an advanced certification and signifies that you have earned a Master's in Nutrition (or related field) and practice nutrition therapy using a science-informed, personalized approach to help people optimize health and improve their quality of life. CNS certification is widely recognized nationally and provides a pathway toward state licensure in some states. Always check with the **appropriate regulatory body** in your state to learn the specific legal requirements.

University of Bridgeport's **Master's in Human Nutrition online program** is a pathway to the CNS credential. While students do not complete the CNS requirements in the

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2. Certified Clinical Nutritionist (CCN)

The Certified Clinical Nutritionist (CCN) is an alternative certification pathway for nutritionists. Certified Clinical Nutritionists assess a person's nutrition needs to achieve normal physiological function. They use a solid foundation in biochemical science to assess a client's history, physical health, and lifestyle and promote optimal health. The CCN certification **has no supervised practice requirement and is therefore not a pathway to licensure in most states.**

For more information, candidates interested in a CCN should contact the Clinical Nutrition Certification Board at 1-972-250-2829.

3. Diplomate, American Clinical Board of Nutrition (DACBN)

The American Clinical Board of Nutrition (ACBN) is a national certifying agency in nutrition for professionals with a doctoral degree. ACBN is one of the few certifying agencies to offer diplomate status to all professionals in the healthcare field.

The ACBN's certification offers advanced standing towards their diplomate program (DACBN), to those with professional doctoral degrees who have completed UB's MS in Nutrition degree. No additional hours of training are required as UB's MS program exceeds the ACBN's course hour requirements.

Pursuing Nutrition Certification

While the above certifications are nationally recognized, they are **not** state or government certifications or licenses. Therefore, these certifications are **not** necessarily

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We have mentioned that the qualification requirements for nutrition certification and licensing can vary greatly from state to state. As such, it is the practitioner's responsibility to check state's licensing requirements if looking to obtain a CNS, CCN, or ACBN and work as a certified clinical nutritionist. Please see **https://theana.org/advocate** or your state regulatory body to get more information about specific requirements in your state.

For example, the requirements for Connecticut licensure (referred to as state certification in CT) typically fall into **the following three categories**:

- **Academic.** Evidence of current registration as a Registered Dietitian from the Commission on Dietetic Registration, or a master's or doctoral degree from a regionally accredited institution with a major course of study which focused primarily on human nutrition or dietetics, and consisted of a minimum of 30 graduate semester credits.
- **Experience.** Not applicable for this type of state licensure.
- **Examination.** A written examination prescribed and/or approved by the state commissioner. The Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS) exam is an approved exam.

At UB, we recommend **MS in Human Nutrition** graduates obtain independent board certification, especially CNS certification, given that the CNS certification is widely recognized and may provide a pathway to licensure in some states. Of course, be sure to check with your state's certification and licensing requirements before pursuing any path.

By obtaining certification from a nationally recognized certifying body and/or state licensure/certification after earning your master's degree, you will be well-positioned to begin a successful career as a clinical nutritionist, educator, researcher, industry consultant, media publisher, or a non-profit or service worker.

With UB's **online MS in Nutrition program**, you'll have access to the College of Health Sciences, which features seven schools and 16 programs across healthcare disciplines. Plus, all our classes are taught by experts in their fields. The diverse experiences and teaching strategies provided by UB's faculty and staff prepares students for a successful career in clinical nutrition.

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